



EPISODE 2x06: “DOWNSTREAM”

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EXT. NEW MELBOURNE – DOCKS – DAY – ESTABLISHING

The New Melbourne Docks float in the middle of a sea – a vast conglomeration of piers, quays, aerial landing platforms, swinging bridges, and warehouses – and do not appear to be connected to any sort of land mass.

The Docks sprawl over an area the size of a large town, with the hustle and bustle the equal of a small city. Boats and ships dock and leave, spaceships land and take off, and FOLK swarm everywhere.

EXT. NEW MELBOURNE DOCKS – LANDING PLATFORM – DAY – ESTABLISHING

Serenity sits on a large landing platform, flanked by two other ships. One is a small, aging FREIGHTER that makes Serenity looks like a prize vessel, while the other is a big, boxy CARGO HAULER.

EXT. SERENITY – DAY

MAL REYNOLDS walks down the CARGO RAMP, nodding to a pair of WORKERS dragging a pallet laden with an open CRATE piled high with FISH and ICE.

ZOE is at the bottom of the ramp, along with MONTY, a giant bear of a man. Since we last saw him in "Trash," he's grown back his beard.

MAL
Everything goin' according to plan, Zoe?

ZOE
Everything except the smell, sir.

Monty takes a deep breath and gives Zoe a comradely clap on the back.

MONTY
Ah, that's just New Melbourne, girl! You'll feel better
soon's you take off!

ZOE
Cargo we're hauling, Monty, don't look to be rid of that
smell anytime soon.

The three of them begin to walk toward the cargo hauler (MONTY'S SHIP).

MAL

Can buy all the roses you want after our nice big payday. We win this race, we get the job with Jorgensen, we're set. Six months, a year tops, we'll have enough coin that we can pick and choose jobs as we please.

MONTY

Last fella worked as chief runner for Jorgensen, I heard he bought his own moon!

ZOE

Last fellow worked as chief runner for Jorgensen, I heard he got pinched during the raid on the Carousel. Which is the whole reason we're having this *< crazy >* race.

MAL

Riggs was there on his own business. Jorgensen's strictly above-the-boards. All the runs are legal.

(beat)

This is it, Zoe. This is the *< big brass ring >* we been waitin' for.

They continue to stroll. Another pair of WORKERS with a PALLET rolls past them toward Serenity.

ZOE

If I understand the terms of the race correctly, sir, it's only a *< big brass ring >* for the ship that gets to Jorgensen's moon first. Everyone else winds up with a cargo hold full of *< filthy, stinking >* fish.

MONTY

Word is, there's some sorta consolation prize for the rest.

Mal smiles a little at Zoe's obvious distaste and discomfort.

MAL

Oh, and rotting, Zoe. Don't forget that the fish'll be rotting. So we need to make sure we get there first.

(to Monty)

No offense, Monty.

MONTY

None taken, Mal. What fun is a race without the racin' part?

By now, the trio has reached:

EXT. MONTY'S SHIP – SAME TIME

MONTY'S CREW is overseeing CRATES of fish being loaded onto the ship. One of the CREW waves to Monty, indicating that everything is fine.

MAL

(to Zoe)

Lookin' forward to a simple, straightforward job for once.
No Alliance, no bounty hunters—

MONTY

No devil women!

MAL

—No devil women...

(beat)

Our resident sibling fugitives safely packed away on
Haven, and us carrying legal cargo, this race is ours.

(to Monty)

Again, no offense.

Monty gives a "None taken" shrug.

MONTY

Never know what'll happen, Mal.

ZOE

Assuming you're right, sir, can we trust this Jorgensen to
hold up his end of things? Seems to me he's a bit...
eccentric.

MONTY

He is a bit mercurial, true enough, but it's good, honest,
easy work. Most folks wouldn't find a replacement for
their most trusted pilot with a race, but...

MAL

I'm tellin' you, Zoe, we win this thing, we're livin' the
good life. And since Mingo and Fandy get their cut, they
grow to love us, too, and things get all the better while
we wait for the coin to come rollin' in.

Mal smiles, takes a deep breath – and winces a little at the stench of New
Melbourne, but quickly recovers.

MAL (cont'd)

This is the turning point. Things are finally goin' our way.

He ignores the skeptical look she gives him, looking past her. WASH hustles across the landing platform to join them. He looks a little green as he kisses Zoe, then nods a greeting to Mal and Monty.

MAL (cont'd)
(to Wash)
How's the competition lookin', Wash?

WASH
(pointing down)
Can you feel that? I swear I can feel the whole thing moving.
(looks around)
I don't think these docks are safe at all. Never thought I'd say this, but I wish to God I had some solid ground under my feet!
(beat; no one responds)
Oh, right. The competition. Because that's what Jayne and I have been scouting out for the past two hours.

MAL
Speaking of, where is Jayne?

WASH
There was a late entry. He went to check it out.

ZOE
That doesn't sound like the best of ideas.

MAL
He's a big boy. He'll be fine.

Mal looks pointedly at Wash, waiting for him to continue.

WASH
(indicates Monty)
Do you want me to...?

MAL
Monty's a friend. Won't hurt none if we share with him.
Right, Monty?

MONTY
I wouldn't try to cheat you or nothin', Mal. Promise!

WASH
Most of the ships I saw can't burn as hard and as long as Serenity can. They want to keep up, they're going to have to stop somewhere to refuel.

MAL

We ain't gonna need to do that, right?

WASH

(shakes his head no)

Figure we should just about make it. Which is good, considering our marked lack of coin to pay for more fuel.

Mal, Zoe and Wash share an uncomfortable look.

MAL

When we win this thing, we ain't gonna have to worry about coin for a long time to come.

WASH

So most of the ships, even Monty here can beat 'em without much of a problem.

(wince)

No offense, Monty.

MONTY

None taken. Like I was sayin' t'Mal 'fore you showed, you never know what's gonna happen in a race like this.

WASH

(to Mal)

Korso's here. That could be a problem. And Rourke—

MAL

(to Monty)

Rourke's in this? You didn't tell me that!

MONTY

Slipped my mind, Mal. Sorry.

MAL

(to Wash)

Rourke's faster than us, ain't he?

WASH

Well...

(beat)

Yeah.

MAL

<Why does nothing ever go my way>?

WASH

We might need to worry about Elgyn, too.

MAL
(nodding)
That old pirate'll sit in the middle of the pack, just layin'
back and waitin', then spring those custom-built thrusters
on everyone.

MONTY
Heard he burnt those things out pullin' away from some
Feds at Beaumonde.

MAL
Still... Rourke. Damn.
(to Wash)
Anything else you want to spring on me?

WASH
Nossir. Rourke, Korso, and Elgyn look to be the real
competition.

Mal's COMM UNIT beeps.

WASH (cont'd)
And maybe the new guy.

EXT. NEW MELBOURNE DOCKS – BRIDGE – DAY

The BRIDGE, fifteen feet wide and thirty long, is a strap of metal connecting two of the larger PLATFORMS. Its sides are rope handrails, and it sways a bit in the water.

The bridge is fairly well-trafficked, with a half-dozen FOLK crossing it in either direction at any given time.

Mal, followed by Zoe, Wash, and Monty, pushes through the crowd to meet JAYNE, who is making his way across the bridge.

Monty moves a step or two past them, and Mal, Jayne, Zoe, and Wash cluster on the bridge, partially blocking foot-traffic.

MAL
(to Jayne)
What's so gorram important you had to tell me face-to-face?

JAYNE
(pointed look at Zoe and Wash)
Didn't know you's gonna bring them, Mal.

Wash watches the two men intently, but Zoe is looking past them, past Monty, in the direction Jayne came from.

MAL
Well, why wouldn't I—

Zoe, still looking past them, tenses.

ZOE
Ott.

Mal turns. Wash's head snaps up. On the far side of the bridge, approaching them, are OTT and his crew: NICO, in her paramilitary leather, GOWE, with his Reaveresque piercings and scarification, and massive CLARENCE, wearing his filthy vest and bowler.

OTT
Why, Malcolm, what a pleasant—

Before he can finish, Zoe's gun is in her hand, pointed straight at Ott's head.

In response, Nico draws two guns, aiming one at Zoe and the other at Mal. Mal and Jayne immediately back Zoe's play, drawing their own weapons and aiming them at Nico. Clarence hauls out his massive rifle, gunning for Jayne. Gowe bounces on his heels and draws a pair of throwing knives, looking like he's ready to toss them at anyone.

Wash, with no gun, takes a step back to stand behind Zoe and Jayne.

And Monty stands on the middle of the bridge, looking back and forth at the two groups locked into the Tarantino-style standoff.

Beat.

MONTY
Gorrammit, Mal! Why does this always happen when you're around!?!


EXT. NEW MELBOURNE DOCKS – BAZAAR – DAY

The bazaar is a jumble of storefronts and stalls where anything can be purchased – but particularly fish and fish-related products.

KAYLEE, carrying a few BAGS, wanders through the crowd, looking at various items. A stall selling jewelry (mostly made from shells) catches her eye.

KAYLEE
Ooh... pretty.

Juggling her bags, she examines the jewelry, then pauses and looks to her right.

The next stall over sells hats, ponchos and similar articles of clothing. A SMALL BOY, urchin-like, maybe eight or nine years old, looks away from Kaylee as she turns toward him. He pretends to examine one of the hats.

She smiles and turns away... watching the boy out of the corner of her eye as he turns to look at her again.

Again, she quickly turns and looks at the boy. Before he can look away, she sticks her tongue out at him. They both laugh.

UGLY MAN (OS)
Hiroku!

The boy's head snaps up fearfully. AN UGLY MAN, dressed in dirty clothing approaches, carrying a few bags. Based on appearance and coloring, it's clear that he's not the boy's father.

UGLY MAN (cont'd)
Where'd you get off to, boy? Got goods for ya to lug.

The ugly man tosses one of the larger SACKS (filled with something squishy, slimy, and heavy) to little Hiroku, the weight of it nearly knocking the boy over.

Kaylee, visibly upset by the interaction, watches the boy follow the ugly man through the bazaar.

EXT. NEW MELBOURNE DOCKS – BRIDGE – DAY

The standoff continues.

ZOE
You remember what I told you, Ott?

Ott, who has still not drawn a weapon, smiles.

OTT
How could I forget? You waxed quite poetical on how you planned to kill me should I come near you or your husband again.

ZOE
Yet here we are.

OTT
Indeed. Here we are.

MAL
(to Zoe)
Maybe we should just—

JAYNE
Maybe we should just finish this right here and now, Mal.

Nico, keeping one gun on Zoe, shifts the other to Jayne.

NICO
Maybe we should, you <great lumbering beast>.

MONTY
I don't think this is really—

OTT
Necessary? No, I imagine it's not. My crew and I are just here to win a race.

MAL
Us, too.

OTT
(scoffs)
Surely you don't think you're going to win in that *luh suh* rust-heap of yours, Malcolm?

MAL
Now might not be the ideal time to be insultin' my ship.

Ott shrugs.

WASH
(quietly)
Zoe, honey, maybe we don't need to kill anyone today?
(beat)
Even these guys.

Zoe backs down a little, but still keeps her gun trained on Ott.

MONTY
I've got an idea, folks. Why don't we all go back to my ship and have a round? Just a friendly race, right?

The guns don't lower.

MONTY (cont'd)
Right?

EXT. NEW MELBOURNE DOCKS – BAZAAR – DAY

Hiroku and the ugly man wind their way through the crowded bazaar, the little boy stumbling under the weight of the massive SACK he's carrying.

The ugly man gets a few steps ahead of Hiroku, and turns, annoyed.

UGLY MAN
(muttering)
Knew I shouldn't'a bought one so young, gorrammit.
Should'a spent the extra coin on a full-grown slave.
Maybe a girl next time...
(to Hiroku)
Hurry it up, you lazy <otter>!

The boy rushes along, trying to catch up. When he gets close enough, the ugly man smacks him in the face. PASSERS-BY pretend not to notice.

The boy falls back from the blow, the sack flopping to the ground and ripping open, spilling out FISH GUTS. Some nearby FOLK trip and slide, causing general chaos. A BIG MAN falls, banging his knee and tearing his pants.

BIG MAN
What the hell—?

The big man stands up and looks angrily at the ugly man.

BIG MAN (cont'd)
What the hell you doin'?

UGLY MAN
Listen, you <ugly moron>, it was an honest accident.

BIG MAN
Honest accident, my *pee-goo*. You owe me a new pair o' pants!

The two men face off angrily and a tearful Hiroku tries to back away from the chaos. He turns as he hears someone whistle OS.

Kaylee, holding the hat Hiroku was looking at, smiles at him and winks.

EXT. MONTY'S SHIP – DAY

A series of crates have been turned into an impromptu "table" with a spread of food (mostly fish) and beverages (mostly liquor). Monty and three of his CREW are at the table, interspersed among Mal's and Ott's crews, sitting on opposite sides.

Everyone's guns are on the table in front of them, and everyone looks like they're ready to reach for them.

MONTY

See? Isn't this nicer'n shootin' each other?

Jayne reaches forward for a BOTTLE OF SAKE. Nico and Clarence both go for their guns, but Ott shakes his head and they back-off.

MAL

Yeah, Monty. This is great fun.

Another of Monty's CREW approaches the table, carrying a tray filled with STEAMING FISH. She puts it down right in front of Zoe.

ZOE

More fish. <Wonderful>.

MAL

Monty, you ain't feedin' us none o' Jorgensen's fish, are you?

MONTY

Lord no! Contract says he don't want it touched none 'fore it gets to him! "Deliver whole and as-is."

OTT

Might as well eat up, Monty, since you're going to wind up with a hold full of fish when we win.

MONTY

Now, Ott, I done invited you here for some fine drink and a nice meal. Can't ya keep a civil tongue for that long?

Zoe sips her drink.

ZOE

Don't imagine he can. Any more'n a snake can stop slitherin'.

NICO

Ott, can I—?

OTT
No.

NICO
Please?

Jayne slugs down some of his sake.

JAYNE
Nice collar you got on that <bitch> of yours, Ott.

Nico looks at Ott, asking permission with her expression.

OTT
Maybe.
(takes a sip of sake)
Later.

MAN (OS)
This where you got off to, Captain?

A HANDSOME MAN, a surfer-type dude with sandy hair and an easy smile, approaches the group.

MAL
BESTER?!

Zoe and Wash exchange a look. Yep, it's Bester, the "genius mechanic" Mal hired before Kaylee came aboard, last seen in "Out of Gas."

Bester barely registers his former crew-mates.

BESTER
(to Ott)
So, yeah, I was finished, uh, entertaining, if you know what I mean—

MAL
(laughing, to Ott)
This guy is your mechanic?!

Bester notices the tray of steaming fish.

BESTER
Hey, fish! Shiny!

Bester leans forward, helping himself.

WASH
(to Ott)
It's a good thing you got that shiny new ship of yours.
Bester's not exactly competent.

Bester looks up from the plate of food he's preparing.

BESTER
(to Wash)
Didn't you used to have a moustache?
(to Ott)
Oh, yeah. Ship's all loaded and ready to go. The fish and
the, uh—
(looks around, not sure he should continue)
"Special" stuff, too.

MAL
You carryin' slaves, Ott? That seems about your level.

MONTY
Hear you can get 'em awful cheap on New Melbourne.
Believe Elgyn's filled his belly with a load.

Ott smiles at Mal, then turns to Monty as he stands up.

OTT
Monty, this has been... Well, it's been something.
(to Mal)
I'll put in a good word for you. When I'm busy taking all
those cushy jobs for Jorgensen, perhaps Emm and Eff will
let you have my <sloppy seconds>.

The rest of Ott's crew stands, picking up their weapons. Jayne grabs his, too.

MAL
(gritted teeth)
Generous. Thanks.

Nico leans forward, reaching for the mostly-full bottle in front of Jayne. Jayne tries to snag it as well, but she's faster.

OTT
Think nothing of it.
(nods to Zoe)
A pleasure as always, my dear. I look forward to more
empty threats from you quite soon.

Wash puts a warning hand on Zoe's arm.

WASH
Honey...

ZOE
<Another time>, Ott.

OTT
Indeed.

He offers her a bow and a smile, then walks away, flanked by Gowe and Clarence. Bester, slightly confused by what's just happened, follows, munching on the fish, taking the tray with him.

Nico is last to go. She takes a long drink straight from the bottle, licks her lips sensuously, and smiles at Jayne before turning to saunter after the rest of the crew.

Beat.

WASH
You know, I really hate those guys.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO HOLD – DAY

As Mal, Jayne, Wash and Zoe, come in, Kaylee is puttering around, looking at the dozen or so CRATES filled with ice and fish. She looks up a little too quickly, smiling a little too brightly.

WASH (cont'd)
No, seriously, I hate those guys.

ZOE
I know, honey.

KAYLEE
Hi, guys!

JAYNE
Shoulda finished it when we had the chance.

MAL
We all work for Emm and Eff, Jayne. Gotta learn to play nice.

Mal takes in the fish, then starts to head for the STAIRS to the upper catwalk.

MAL (cont'd)
(to Kaylee)
Get everything you need in town?

KAYLEE
Yup! Got all the replacement parts we needed and even
had some extra to pick up a pretty for m'self!

She displays a shell necklace she's wearing.

WASH
Hey, shiny! And shelly!

MAL
Wash, get us ready to leave the world. Race starts in
less'n an hour.

ZOE
Sir?

Mal looks back.

ZOE (cont'd)
We better win this gorram thing, because I don't think
we're ever getting rid of this smell.

Mal smiles and continues up the stairs.

EXT. HAVEN – CHURCH – NOON

The church is largely finished, but clearly still under construction.

SHEPHERD BOOK stands in front of the church, hands on his hips, surveying his surroundings. On the ground around him are PILES OF WOOD. The pieces of wood are intricately carved and look like they should fit together into something. In fact, they are the makings of PEWS, but they're not quite there yet.

Book kneels down, grabbing two pieces of wood and tries to piece them together. Judging from his frustration, he's been at it for a while.

SIMON (OS)
Would another set of hands help, Shepherd?

Book looks up at SIMON, delight on his face.

BOOK
Doctor!

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – LATER

Wash is in the pilot's seat, adjusting dials and prepping the ship. Zoe sits in the co-pilot's seat.

WASH

Look, honey, all I'm saying is that if Mal's right about this job, it could change everything. Not getting shot at, for a start. Nice, legal, easy runs. Vacation time and the coin to spend on it...

(fiddles with a button)

Did I mention the not getting shot at part?

Zoe smiles and watches him.

WASH (cont'd)

If we actually manage to win this, life on the ship's going to change.

(beat)

After Prospero, the Alliance seems to think River is dead, we haven't seen those bounty hunters for weeks, and if we can actually manage to take legal jobs, we might not make more enemies any time soon.

ZOE

What are you saying?

He stops what he's doing and looks up at her.

WASH

We win, maybe we can try things your way. On Serenity.

ZOE

You mean that?

WASH

Jayne's not exactly my idea of the perfect babysitter, but, yeah, if people stop shooting at us for nine months or so, I think things might... develop.

Zoe smiles, stands, walks across the bridge to Wash.

ZOE

Maybe.

She kisses him hard, settling into his lap. They get romantic for a few beats.

MAL (OS)

Whoa!

Zoe and Wash separate, both looking at Mal in the doorway.

MAL (cont'd)
You two celebratin' already? Race ain't even started!

Zoe stands up.

ZOE
Just tryin' to give my mister a little inspiration, sir.

EXT. NEW MELBOURNE DOCKS – DAY

Serenity lifts off.

It's one of more than a dozen vehicles to do so. The other ships (most of which make Serenity look like a prize) include Monty's cargo hauler, and Ott's Hawk-class, which is shiny black, predatory, sleeker than Serenity but almost twice her length.

The ships roar up into the sky. The race is on.

EXT. SPACE ABOVE NEW MELBOURNE

The ships break atmo, all roaring off in the same direction, some quickly outdistancing the others.

Ott's ship hangs back, then heads in another direction entirely.

EXT. SPACE – LATER

Serenity sails through the black.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Mal stands up from the co-pilot's seat and looks at Wash, who is the only other occupant on the bridge.

MAL
You don't need anything, I think I'm gonna try to catch some shut-eye.

WASH
I'm good.

Mal heads for the door and into:

INT. SERENITY – FOREDECK HALL – CONTINUOUS

Mal walks to the door to his bunk, pops it open, and starts down the ladder.

Before he drops more than a few steps, however, he hears a noise – possibly a cup or can falling – coming from the direction of the DINING ROOM.

He steps back into the foredeck hall and walks toward the:

INT. SERENITY – DINING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

The room is quiet, but there's an open CAN OF PROTEIN on the table, on its side, its sticky contents oozing out. The chairs on one side of the table are askew, as if quickly pulled out.

Mal looks at the can, then crouches down on his haunches, looking under the table.

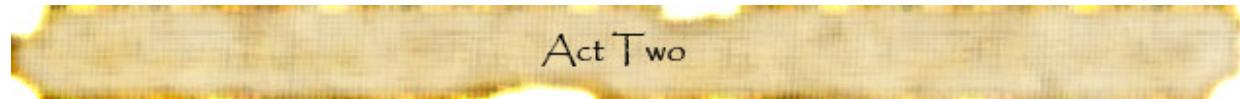
Hiding underneath it, among the chairs, faced smudged with protein, is Hiroku.

MAL

Um, hi.

(beat)

Who the hell are you?



Act Two

INT. SERENITY – DINING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Mal's still looking under the table at Hiroku.

KAYLEE (OS)

I can explain everything, Cap'n.

Mal looks up. Kaylee's standing in the aft doorway.

MAL

Somehow, I doubt that.

KAYLEE

This ain't what it looks like.

MAL

Good. 'Cause what it looks like is that one of my gorram crew went an' got <soft-hearted> and took a stray, probably a slave by the battered look of him, onto my ship without so much as a consult in my direction.

KAYLEE

Okay. Maybe it is what it looks like. But, Cap'n—

MAL

(frustrated)

Kaylee...

Mal stands slowly and walks toward Kaylee, who comes into the room to meet him.

KAYLEE

Captain, honest, I thought sure you'd be shiny with it, on account of you dislikin' slavers so—

MAL

Got no love of slavers, or slaver-owners, true enough, but if this boy is bought and paid for, you just brought us a world of trouble.

KAYLEE

Hiroku's master ain't gonna come after us. He's just a local fisherman back at New Melbourne. Ain't got the ship or the means—

MAL

What if he decides to hire a ship?

KAYLEE

Hiroku says they got hardly enough money to eat.

MAL

Does he now?

HIROKU (OS)

It's true, sir.

Mal turns around to glare at Hiroku, who has clambered out from under the table, and is now standing in the dining room, trying to look very small.

HIROKU (cont'd)

Edgar ain't got no spaceship and he ain't got no friends, neither, sir.

MAL
(to Kaylee)
What if he reports us to the Alliance?

KAYLEE
For stealin' his slave, Mal? That'd make him the criminal!

Jayne walks in from the foredeck entrance. He heads right for the dining room cabinets, but stops mid-stride when he sees Hiroku.

JAYNE
Hey. A kid.

And then Jayne continues on to the cabinets.

MAL
Seems to me you could be forgettin' how important this job is to all of us, Kaylee. We win this thing, we're set.
(beat)
Which is why Simon and River are <sitting pretty> on Haven. Nice and simple. No complications on this one.
(points at Hiroku)
That is a complication.

Kaylee stares at him for a beat. In the background, Jayne roots through the cabinets, apparently looking for something to eat.

KAYLEE
No, Cap'n. That's a little boy who needs us to take care of him.

Mal and Kaylee glare at one another for another beat, then Mal breaks.

MAL
The boy can stay. For now. But he's your responsibility and you goram well better keep him out from underfoot. He causes any trouble, it's on you.

Kaylee nods.

MAL (cont'd)
An' you'd best hope we don't run afoul of no Alliance trouble, or I swear to <high heaven> I will space that little <piece of trouble> and you may well be a half-step behind.

Mal turns and heads out through the foredeck entrance.

JAYNE
Hey, look! We got some of them Fruity Bars left!
(to Kaylee)
Want one?

EXT. HAVEN – CHURCH – AFTERNOON

Simon and Book are still working on one of the pews. They stand and back away from their handiwork. One of the pews sits in the dust, complete.

SIMON
Well, I guess—

The pew rocks and shifts to the side. They both rush forward and steady it before anything snaps or breaks.

SIMON
(pointing to one of the joints)
What if we...?

BOOK
No, I don't think that's...

Working together, they turn the pew on its back so the pressure is off the weak joints. They sit in the dust and look at one another, frustrated, but also amused.

BOOK
Well, my good doctor, it appears that the Lord did not intend for either of us to be a carpenter.

SIMON
You seem to have done just fine with the wood. These carvings are beautiful.

BOOK
Wish I could claim credit for that, son, but it was Derek did most of the work.

SIMON
Derek? You mean that criminal...?

BOOK
That young man has the hands of an artist. Another life, a different set of choices, he'd been somewhere completely different from Haven.

Beat. They share a look.

BOOK (cont'd)
But then, I suppose that applies to more than just Derek,
doesn't it?

EXT. SPACE

Serenity sails forward.

INT. SERENITY – ENGINE ROOM

Kaylee putters about the engine room, full of nervous energy. Hiroku sits on the floor, watching her and eating a Fruity-Oaty Bar.

KAYLEE
Now, don't you pay no mind to the Cap'n. He's just
having a bad day... Well, week... Well, maybe more'n
that...

She fiddles with a console.

KAYLEE (cont'd)
Thing of it is, he don't mean nothin' by his anger.
(beat)
He's a good man. He cares, even if he don't show it
much. We'll take good care of you here on Serenity.

HIROKU
Thank you, ma'am.

KAYLEE
(laughing)
Ain't no reason to call me ma'am. Told you before, you
can jus' call me Kaylee. Ma'am makes me sound like
someone's gramma!

The two of them share a laugh.

KAYLEE
Now this here...
(points)
This is the anterior transverse—

Hiroku is already staring blankly.

KAYLEE (cont'd)
We'll worry about that later.

Kaylee continues her work. Hiroku watches her, finishing his Fruity-Oaty Bar.

HIROKU
How 'bout the big one? Is he a good man, too?

KAYLEE
Jayne? He's... Different from the Cap'n.

HIROKU
Is he yours?

KAYLEE
Mine?!? Jayne?!?

HIROKU
(shrugs)
Seems like he's awful nice t'you.

KAYLEE
No, he ain't mine.
(beat)
I ain't got no man of my own.

EXT. HAVEN – CHURCH – AFTERNOON

Simon looks serious. He and Book, still sitting in the dust, are in mid-conversation.

SIMON
No, Kaylee, she... We had a...
(beat)
When we were at Whitefall, there was a child who died.
Kaylee feels responsible, I think. She took it very hard. I
tried to talk to her, but... Some of the things she said to
me... I'm afraid that I...

Book waits for him to continue.

SIMON (cont'd)
This probably doesn't come as a surprise, Shepherd, but I
often find I say the exact wrong thing to women.

BOOK
In my experience, that just means you're a man.

SIMON
I wish it were that simple.
(beat)
I recently ran into an old friend. Someone from before...

BOOK
A female friend?

Simon nods.

BOOK (cont'd)
And this... female friend... She complicates matters with
Kaylee?

SIMON
Yes. Maybe. I don't know. When I saw her, it was like... I
felt like maybe I could have my old life back.
(beat)
And now that the Alliance thinks that River's dead...

BOOK
You're thinking that maybe you have options besides
Serenity.

Beat. Simon doesn't respond.

BOOK (cont'd)
That's a lot to have on your mind, son. Have you spoken
to anyone else about this?

SIMON
Just... Inara.

BOOK
Inara?

SIMON
She and I... We've kept in touch.

BOOK
(smiling)
So you're quite the ladies' man, after all, aren't you, son?

Simon looks down at the overturned pew.

SIMON
Maybe we should get back to work.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE

Wash pilots the ship, with Mal and Zoe standing behind him. They're talking to Monty via the WAVE MONITOR.

MAL (to Wave monitor)
Appreciate you callin' to let us know, Monty.

MONTY (via Wave monitor)
'Course, Mal. Why wouldn't I? We're friends.

ZOE (to Wave monitor)
Any idea how the Alliance got wind of the race?

MONTY (via Wave monitor)
Don't know, but you've heard the same thing I have
about Jorgensen. Wouldn't put it past him to have called
them himself, just to see how we react. A hoop to jump
through, if you will.

WASH
(to Mal)
So you want me to just keep going, Mal?

MAL
Just a standard blockade, and we got nothin' to hide. I'm
sure they'll find something to fine us for—

MONTY (via Wave monitor)
They always do.

MAL
But we're on the up-and-up today. Just carryin' a load of
fish.

ZOE
Think the boy will be trouble?

MAL
Doubt it, but I cannot plainly express how glad I am we're
flyin' without the doctor and his <completely goggle-
eyed> sister today.

WASH
But, Mal, she adds color! Mostly red, you know, with the
random stabbings and all, but color just the same.

MONTY (via Wave monitor)
From what I can tell, you're less than a half hour behind
Korso, and he ain't hit the blockade yet. I hear back from
Rourke, I'll try to let you know what you can expect.

MAL (to Wave monitor)
I'd be much obliged, Monty.

MONTY (via Wave monitor)
That's what friends are for!

Monty signs off, leaving Mal, Zoe and Wash alone.

MAL
So, we're third.

WASH
Could be worse.

ZOE
Could be better.

Wash shrugs and nods.

INT. SERENITY – ENGINE ROOM

Kaylee continues fiddling. Hiroku, now sitting on her hammock, swinging, looks bored and listless. His stomach makes a deep GRUMBLING NOISE.

KAYLEE
Oh, you poor thing! You've barely had a real meal all day!

INT. SERENITY – DINING ROOM

With Hiroku standing by, Kaylee goes through the cabinets, looking inside each.

KAYLEE
No. No. No... No.

HIROKU
Kaylee, I can...

KAYLEE
All we have is protein!

Beat. Then she smiles at Hiroku.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE

Jayne has joined Wash, Zoe, and Mal on the bridge.

WASH
Ten minutes to the blockade.

JAYNE

Why ain't we heard from Monty yet? Shouldn't they be done with Rourke by now?

MAL

There any way we can go around it, Wash?

WASH

Not without losing a lot of time.

MAL

Might be worth it. We go far, we avoid the blockade.

JAYNE

Might more'n make up for the time we lose talkin' t'them purplebellies. They been with Rourke more'n a half-hour.

ZOE

Or they might have a secondary blockade set up and look at us more closely because we're tryin' to run.

Beat.

JAYNE

Or that.

WASH

Besides, we're gonna be runnin' low on fuel anyway. We go the long way around, I can't make any promises.

INT. SERENITY – DINING ROOM

Hiroku, sitting at the dining room table, looks up as Kaylee hustles in from the aft entrance.

She smiles and holds up something.

One of Jorgensen's fish.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE

Mal looks over Wash's shoulder.

WASH

Five minutes.

MAL
Just keep goin', Wash.

ZOE
You know what I'm wondering?

The three men look at her.

ZOE (cont'd)
Where's Ott?

INT. SERENITY – DINING ROOM

Kaylee's got a nice little set-up going on. The fish is on the counter, a large knife next to it, and a frying pan is already sizzling, waiting.

She smiles back to Hiroku, who eyes the fish expectantly.

Kaylee picks up the knife, starts to cut the fish.

She stops abruptly, putting the knife down, looking at the fish more closely. We don't get a good look at what she's seeing.

Hiroku stands up and moves closer.

Kaylee backs away from the fish, nervous, and looks down the foredeck hall toward the bridge.

KAYLEE
CAPTAIN!

INT. SERENITY – FOREDECK HALL

Mal rushes toward the:

INT. SERENITY – DINING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Mal runs in. Kaylee looks at him guiltily, and points toward the fish.

MAL
Kaylee, what are we thinkin'? You know these fish need to be delivered as-is!

KAYLEE
(pointing again)
Mal!

Mal moves closer to the fish, still sitting on the counter. He studies it (and, again, we don't see what he's seeing), then suddenly picks up the knife and rushes out of the dining room, through the aft exit.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO HOLD – SECONDS LATER

Zoe, Jayne, and Kaylee, with Hiroku trailing behind, come out onto the UPPER CATWALK, looking down at Mal.

Mal is standing next to one of the crates, pulling out the fish one at a time and sloppily tearing each one open with the knife.

He looks inside briefly, then tosses the fish across the room. There's already almost a dozen dead fish on the floor.

ZOE

Sir?

Mal picks up another fish, slices it open, looks inside.

MAL

<My karma is so, so very bad>!

He reaches into the fish and yanks out a small plastic packet filled with white powder. He holds it up so that those on the upper catwalk can see.

MAL

Drugs.



Act Three

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE

Wash is alone, flying the ship.

ZOE (via com)

Turn us around.

WASH (into com)

But, honey, we're—

ZOE (via com)

Turn us around.

EXT. SPACE

In the distance, a half-dozen ALLIANCE PATROL BOATS surround Korso and Rourke's ships. Other Alliance ships range out, hunting.

Serenity turns tail.

INT. SERENITY – DINING ROOM

The crew sits at the dining room table. Hiroku hovers at Kaylee's shoulder, and Wash is in the foredeck entrance, bouncing on his heels, ready to run to the bridge.

A small pile of PLASTIC PACKETS sits on the table.

MAL

One in every ten fish.

JAYNE

That's a lotta drugs.

Mal ignores him, looks at Wash.

MAL

Options?

WASH

None that'll help us win the race. We're low on fuel, Mal. Can make Haven, Constantine's, probably even Boros, but they're all in the opposite direction.

MAL

If we don't fuel up?

WASH

Way we've been burning, no way we're makin' Jorgensen's moon.

Mal leans back.

JAYNE

(pointing at the packets)

Could sell this stuff. Fetch a decent price on Beaumonde or Persephone.

ZOE

We're not—

MAL

Sellin' it's exactly what we're gonna do if we don't win this race. That's our consolation prize.

Zoe looks at Wash. She's not happy. Mal doesn't catch the look.

MAL (cont'd)

Not near as good as workin' for Jorgensen, but it should cover our expenses on this.

KAYLEE

So is it just us?

MAL

What d'ya mean?

KAYLEE

Is it just us with the drugs, or everybody?

JAYNE

Would explain why Monty hasn't heard from 'em yet.

ZOE

Thought Jorgensen was above-the-boards.

MAL

Jobs are, but he's powerful eccentric. Probably part of the test. See how we react. Hell, see who even figures it out.

WASH

We can call Monty—

MAL

No!

Everyone looks at him.

MAL (cont'd)

If it is everyone, this is gonna cut down on the competition.

ZOE

You're going to let Monty get pinched?

MAL

Monty's got at least a few hours 'til he hits the blockade. We tell 'im now, he'll blab to everyone, and it's Elgyn's race to win. That bastard's got enough fuel he can afford to go the long way around.

(off Zoe's look)
That's the way it's gonna be.

Mal stands abruptly and starts to walk out of the room, to the foredeck exit.

ZOE
Where you goin', sir?

Mal steps around Wash.

MAL
To get some answers.

EXT. HAVEN – CHURCH – LATE AFTERNOON

FOLKS are starting to head home from the mines, and many of them wave to Simon and Book as they pass by.

Simon and Book are now surrounded by three upended pews.

SIMON
(appraising them)
Maybe we should've figured out the problem with the first one before putting together two more.

BOOK
Could be that would've been the better way to go, yes.
(beat)
So your... issues. Have you discussed them with her yet?

Simon looks up at Book, to where he's looking.

ACROSS THE ROAD

RIVER is playing with a half-dozen or so CHILDREN of various ages, from about four to twelve. One of the younger children is sitting on a swing while River pushes her, and the others surround River with a chorus of "Me next!"

River realizes someone's watching her and looks up at Simon and Book, smiling and waving.

INT. SERENITY – MAL'S BUNK

Mal stands in front of his personal WAVE MONITOR, which currently displays MINGO and FANTY, squeezed into the frame.

MINGO (via Wave monitor)
Malcolm Reynolds.

FANTY (via Wave monitor)
Malcolm Reynolds!

MAL (to Wave monitor)
Mingo. Fandy.

FANTY (via Wave monitor)
Can't say as that we're surprised to hear from you.

MINGO (via Wave monitor)
Well, maybe a little.

On the monitor, they share a look.

FANTY (via Wave monitor)
(nods)
Maybe a little.

MAL (to Wave monitor)
Something you boys need to tell me?

MINGO (via Wave monitor)
What would that be, Mal?

MAL (to Wave monitor)
Where's Ott?
(beat, no response)
How did he know about the blockade?

Mingo and Fandy look at each other and smile. Mal pieces it together.

MAL (cont'd, to Wave monitor)
Gorram <wretched piece of dog feces>! <How did I not
see this coming>?!? <There's no depths that bastard
won't->! That bastard called the Alliance on the rest of
us his own self, didn't he?

FANTY (via Wave monitor)
Ott does what he needs to do to get the job done.

MINGO (via Wave monitor)
Don't be mad, Mal.

FANTY (via Wave monitor)
You figured out the game. No need to worry about the
blockade.

MINGO (via Wave monitor)
And Malcolm Reynolds gets away clean.

MAL (to Wave monitor)
I ain't in this to get away clean. I'm in this to win.

Mingo and Fenty look at one another. Fenty shrugs.

FANTY (via Wave monitor)
Ott does what he needs to do.

MINGO (via Wave monitor)
Take out the competition. Remove variables from the equation.

MAL (to Wave monitor)
I ain't asking again.
(beat)
Where. Is. He?

EXT. CASTILLO – REFUELING STATION – AFTERNOON – ESTABLISHING

Castillo is a dusty little moon. The refueling station is little more than a landing strip that can accommodate two or three ships, and a half-dozen Quonset-hut buildings.

Ott's Hawk-class ship sits on the landing strip, gleaming and black, being serviced by a PIT CREW of a half-dozen men.

EXT. CASTILLO – OTT'S SHIP – AFTERNOON

While the uniformed pit crew (a scruffy lot) scurries to refuel and service the ship, Ott sits comfortably in a lounge chair, watching. An attractive REDHEAD brings him a beverage and he smiles up at her.

The redhead ignores Ott, instead watching shirtless Bester, who is talking to one of the pit crew.

Ott takes a sip of his drink and then—

Serenity roars overhead, buzzing Ott's ship, coming in low enough that the redhead ducks for cover and Ott spills his drink on himself.

OTT
(sighs)
Malcolm...

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – MOMENTS LATER

Wash is settling the ship down. Zoe and Mal are on the bridge as well.

WASH

I've mentioned that I hate these guys, right?

ZOE

(to Mal)

Sir, we really should let Monty know now.

MAL

(shakes his head)

Monty tells Elgyn, he can still find a way around and we're
<fresh out of luck>.

ZOE

You can't mean to abandon Monty.

MAL

We'll call him... soon. Should still be an hour, maybe two
until he hits the blockade.

(off Zoe's skeptical look)

B'sides, he might figure things out his own self.

Zoe crosses her arms.

WASH

Even with Elgyn out of the way and Korso and Rourke
pinched, Mal, Ott's ship is still faster than us.

MAL

Best you figure out something to do about that, then.

WASH

Nothing to figure out, Captain. They're faster than us.
Even if they're filling up completely and we leave now,
they'll beat us.

MAL

Get us just enough fuel to reach Jorgensen's moon and
get us out of the world quick as you can.

WASH

That smart Mal? We're not exactly heavy on coin at the
moment, and this Jorgensen seems crazy enough that
he's probably not going to give us a discount on juice if
we come in second.

MAL

Figure out a gorram way to not be second, then!

Mal stalks out, leaving Wash and Zoe to look at one another.

EXT. CASTILLO – SERENITY – AFTERNOON

Mal, Zoe, Wash and Jayne come down the ramp. Jayne has his rifle, VERA, out and aimed, because Ott, Clarence, Gowe, and Nico are waiting for them. Nico is the only one to draw her own firearm. Clarence is holding a TRAY OF DRINKS.

OTT

Glad you could make it, Malcolm.

MAL

This is how you win a race, Ott? By getting all the other contestants arrested?

OTT

Don't play indignant with me, Malcolm. We both know that Korsos deserves nothing less, and Rourke is an... unfortunate casualty. I'm sure you've informed your good friend Monty by now and he—

Mal looks down. Beat.

Then Ott laughs.

OTT

You didn't tell him, did you?

NICO

He thinks he can still win the race. Priceless.

WASH

(to Zoe)

Have I mentioned—?

Zoe nods in agreement.

OTT

We've brought you some fine beverages, Malcolm. A peace offering to you and your crew, if you will.

Clarence moves forward with the tray.

OTT (cont'd)

Some sort of local concoction. Quite *<delicious>*, if a bit strong. Perhaps you're pilot shouldn't partake. He's not particularly hardy, if I recall correctly.

Everyone looks at Zoe, but she doesn't move. Not a muscle.

Clarence approaches Mal's crew with the tray. He offers it forward and before anyone else can react, Jayne pushes Vera under the tray and snaps her up.

A half-dozen glasses spill all over Clarence.

Wash snorts a laugh, then takes a step back, realizing violence may ensue.

Nico and Gowe step forward, straining like leashed animals, ready to attack, but Ott stays them with a wave of his hand.

OTT

Go hwong tong *<enough of this nonsense>*, Malcolm. You do understand that you can't beat us in that piece of *luh suh* *<garbage>*, don't you?

NICO

We're faster than you.

OTT

We're better.

MAL

But we're prettier.

(to Wash)

Get it done. Jayne, go with him so there's no trouble.

As Wash and Jayne head down the ramp, Mal turns and heads back into the ship. Zoe stays on the ramp, arms folded, watching Ott and his crew.

EXT. HAVEN – CHURCH – NIGHT

Simon and Book now have five pews assembled. Four are on their sides. Book is holding the fifth one and slowly backs away.

It holds for a beat, then leans to the side with a snap of wood.

SIMON

Maybe we can ask Derek for help?

BOOK

No, this is a matter of principle now.

Book roots through their tools and picks up a hammer. Looks like he wants to smash the pews.

RIVER (OS)
You're doing it all wrong, you know.

River has joined them. She holds her hand out to Book, indicating that he should give her the hammer.

INT. SERENITY – DINING ROOM

Mal, Zoe, Kaylee, and Hiroku are sitting at the table, when Wash and Jayne come in to join them.

WASH
Half hour to fuel up, forty minutes, tops. Just enough to get us stranded on Jorgensen's moon.

MAL
Ott?

WASH
Another ninety minutes.

JAYNE
Bastard's havin' the whole ship serviced. Fuel topped off, lines cleaned...

WASH
Thinks he can't lose.

MAL
And?

WASH
He can't lose.
(beat)
Look, Mal, that ship of his is faster than we are. A lot faster.

Jayne throws himself into a chair.

JAYNE
Could Wave Elgyn. He might still be able to beat him.

ZOE
Can't do that. Elgyn beats Ott because we helped him, we go down on Mingo and Fenty's list.

MAL
She's right. We have to beat Ott ourselves.

WASH
Can't be done, Mal.

JAYNE
Can't win if they ain't breathin'.

WASH
While I normally advocate peaceful solutions, there is a certain elegant logic to Jayne's suggestion.

KAYLEE
Wash!

WASH
Kidding. Just kidding. Maybe.

ZOE
Sir, much as I hate to admit it, and much as it will galls me to lose to them, I don't see any other options.

JAYNE
If we can't kill 'em, what if we bust up that gorram ship? I'd like to see how <fast> that chicken flies missin' a wing.

WASH
No way any of us could get near it.

ZOE
Even if we wanted—

MAL
Now, Wash, I don't know as that's true.

Mal looks down the table at Kaylee, who does not immediately realize he's looking at her.

KAYLEE
What? Who? Me?
(beat)
I ain't gonna sabotage no ship, Cap'n.

Mal stands up.

MAL

We win this race, little Kaylee, we're set and <pretty> for the foreseeable future. We lose it, we're back to scrapin' in the dirt for coin. I will not lose because you won't do what needs to be done.

KAYLEE

No.

ZOE

Captain, I don't—

JAYNE

Mal, I ain't so sure—

MAL

(to Kaylee)

I am captain of this boat, and you will goram do what I tell you to.

Kaylee crosses her arms, says nothing.

MAL (cont'd)

(points at Hiroku)

You want your little complication to stay on the ship? Then you will goram do everything in your power to pull your weight and his and help this ship win this race, or so help me, the boy gets off here.

(beat)

Maybe Ott'll give him a ride.

WASH

(nervous)

Mal, Ott's carrying a load of slaves!

Mal looks at Kaylee, letting that sink in.

KAYLEE

You wouldn't...

MAL

Wouldn't I?

Mal and Kaylee stare at each other while the others look on uncomfortably.

EXT. CASTILLO – OTT'S SHIP – AFTERNOON

Bester is looking over the shoulder of one of the local pit crew, as he works on something on the underside of one of the ship's wings.

BESTER
You sure that tube goes there?
(off the crewer's nod)
Coulda sworn...
(scratches his head, studying things)
Huh.

KAYLEE (OS)
Hey.

Bester turns to find Kaylee sashaying toward him, a seductive smile on her face.

BESTER
Um... Hey.

Kaylee reaches the wing, leans up and runs her hand along it.

KAYLEE
Mighty fine ship you got here. I wonder what her engine room looks like?

INT. OTT'S SHIP – ENGINE ROOM

The engine room is bright and shiny, all black and silver, with many of the parts behind glass panels. There are banks and banks of blinking lights. It's the antithesis of Serenity's engine room.

Bester slams Kaylee up against one of the glass panels, grinding against her, kissing her neck. He's all hands.

BESTER
We meet before or somethin'?

She turns away from him, facing the glass panel. He pushes up against her from behind, reaching around, trying to unbutton her dress.

Kaylee reaches down under her own skirt, pulling out and palming a SMALL DEVICE.

She turns around, facing Bester. He smiles and tries to kiss her. She jams the device into his ribs and hits a button.

It's a TASER. Bester shakes, rattles, and rolls back. He falls down, hitting the ground, drooling.

Kaylee stands over him for a beat, then she starts to shake and cry. She doubles over and vomits.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO HOLD

Mal, Zoe, and Jayne stand around anxiously. Jayne, in particular, looks nervous. Hiroku sits on the upper catwalk, staring down.

Kaylee stomps up the ramp, red-faced, drying her eyes. She doesn't make eye contact with anyone.

KAYLEE
It's done. They ain't takin' off no time soon.

MAL
Great. Good job—

Kaylee steps around Mal, heading for the stairs. She tosses the taser to Jayne.

KAYLEE
<Worked like a charm>.

JAYNE
Shiny! Did he wriggle? 'Parently they wriggle!

MAL
Kaylee!

Mal moves to follow Kaylee up the stairs, but Zoe catches his eye and gives him a "Don't, sir" shake of her head.

JAYNE
We gonna go take 'em now? Finish this? Oh, and, uh, free them slaves?

MAL
We got a race to win. We know where they'll be after.

Zoe is not pleased.

ZOE
If we ain't goin', I believe you have somethin' else to take care of. A certain call to make?

EXT. CASTILLO – REFUELING STATION – LATE AFTERNOON

Serenity lifts off. Ott's ship doesn't.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE

Wash pilots the ship. Mal's in the co-pilot's seat talking to Monty via the Wave monitor. Zoe stands behind Mal.

MONTY (via Wave monitor)
Well, thanks for tellin' me, Mal. I really appreciate the warning!

MAL (to Wave monitor)
Hey, Monty... Sure. That's what friends are for, right?

Zoe watches Mal expressionlessly.

EXT. SPACE – LATER

Serenity approaches Jorgensen's moon, which from a distance, appears lifeless and gray.

WASH (VO)
Almost there, captain.

In the distance, on the other side of the planet, a sparkle, SOMETHING METALLIC, appears, also rushing toward the moon.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE

Wash, Mal, Zoe and Jayne are on the bridge, all looking anxious and excited.

MAL
What... Wash, what is that?

WASH
I... Wait...
(fiddles with the controls)
Looks like another—

VOICE (via com)
Long time no see, Reynolds.

Mal deflates.

MAL
Elgyn.

EXT. SPACE

Serenity and ELGYN'S SHIP roar toward Jorgensen's moon from different angles. Elgyn's ship is almost the opposite of Serenity, a small fuselage mounted above and behind two MASSIVE engines.



Act Four

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MOON

The moon, craggy, crater-filled, covered with gray dust, is lifeless and quiet for a beat.

Then, Serenity and Elgyn's ship roar over the horizon, jockeying for position, kicking up dust behind them.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE

Wash is a maestro at the controls.

WASH
Gonna be a near thing, Captain.
(hits some switches)
Bastard is fast.

ELGYN (via com)
You're not gonna beat me, Mal. Accept it, gut those fish
for your consolation prize and head home.

MAL
I did not come this far to come in second.

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MOON – SAME TIME

The two ships continue forward, surging like racehorses in the final stretch.

In the distance, JORGENSEN'S OASIS, a beautiful circle of terraformed green, appears.

The ships angle straight toward it.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Mal leans over Wash.

MAL (cont'd)

No, really. I didn't come this far to come in second.

WASH

Working on it.

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MOON

With a sudden burst of speed, Elgyn pulls ahead.

But then, another ship – Monty's ship – rises from one of the craters, blocking him.

As Serenity shoots past, Monty stays in front of Elgyn, harrying him, slowing him.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Wash stares at his control panels, stunned.

WASH

What? MONTY?

MAL

Monty?!?

ELGYN (via com)

Out of my way, you hairy yeti!

MONTY (via com)

No, Elgyn. This is Mal's day. We'd've both been took by the Alliance without him.

(beat)

Go, Mal.

MAL (to com)

But, Monty—

MONTY (via com)

You saved Elgyn and me both from some prison time. Go. You deserve this.

Mal looks around, can't meet Zoe's gaze.

ELGYN (via com)
Outta my way! Or you'll get what you deserve!

MONTY (via com)
You'd best be gone, Elgyn. Can't imagine Jorgensen'd want you trackin' trouble to his little moon with that load o' slaves you're carrying.

WASH (to com)
Monty, how in the name of <Buddha's shiny red buttocks> did you get ahead of us?

MONTY (via com)
Elgyn ain't the only one with customized thrusters. Told ya there's all kinds of surprises in a race like this.

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MOON

Serenity races toward Jorgensen's oasis.

EXT. HAVEN – CHURCH – NIGHT

Three of the five pews sit neatly behind one another, looking solid and complete. A fourth is upside-down, and River kneels over it, hammering away. She stops and shuffles down to another part of the pew's underside.

She reaches up a hand without looking up, and Simon, who has been watching her through the process, hands her a rectangular PIECE OF WOOD less than two inches thick and six inches long.

She positions it against the pew's center brace, then puts her hand up again. Shepherd Book hands her four NAILS. She puts three in her mouth and places the fourth one against the piece of wood.

RIVER
(around the nails)
You boobs were going about it all wrong. Missing a piece.

She begins to hammer.

RIVER (cont'd)
Provides strength and support but nobody sees it.

Simon and Book watch her hammer away.

BOOK
Son, maybe it's time you talked to her.

SIMON
Maybe it is.

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MOON – OASIS – DAY – ESTABLISHING

The Oasis is perhaps a few dozen acres, lush and green and tropical, edged by the dead gray of the lifeless moon.

At the heart of the green is a series of beautiful buildings centered around a sprawling mansion. The back of the mansion opens to a vast courtyard, part of which doubles as a landing pad.

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MOON – LANDING PAD – DAY

Two SHUTTLES and a SPACE YACHT, all far more luxurious than Serenity, sit on the landing pad.

Serenity flies overhead and comes in for a landing.

EXT. SERENITY – DAY

The ramp is down and a half-dozen MEN IN LIVERY are offloading crates of fish while Mal, Zoe, Wash and Jayne watch. Kaylee and Hiroku are nowhere to be seen.

JORGENSEN (OS)
Malcolm Reynolds!

JORGENSEN waddles toward the crew. He's bloated and eccentric, smoking a cigar and wearing an expensive, colorful jacket, an ascot, and, incongruously, a sailor's hat.

JORGENSEN (cont'd)
I've just now gotten off the Wave with Mingo and Fenty.
They are ecstatic, my good man, simply ecstatic! And elated!

MAL
I'm certain they were.

Jorgensen comes up to Mal, and Mal seems ready to shake hands, but instead Jorgensen catches him in a big bear hug.

WASH
Well, he's certainly friendly.

ZOE
Seems that way.

JORGENSEN
Malcolm Reynolds, you are my new favorite captain!

MAL
(choked)
Well, that's... Mighty... Little air, please?

Jorgensen backs away, smiling.

JORGENSEN
Malcolm—May I call you Malcolm?
(off Mal's nod)
We're going to do a great deal of business together.
Would it be possible to get a tour of your *<fine>* vessel?

MAL
Wash, would you...?

Wash nods.

JORGENSEN
Wash? The legendary Hoban Washburn! I've heard a great deal of your exploits from a mutual acquaintance, and expect to hear quite a bit more as we tour this magnificent ship!

WASH
Legendary?
(to the crew)
Finally, someone who can appreciate—

Anything else is cut off as Jorgensen catches Wash in a hug.

WASH (cont'd)
(small)
Ouch.

Jorgensen lets Wash go and the two of them start to walk up the ramp. Jorgensen pauses halfway up and turns back to Mal.

JORGENSEN
Congratulations, Malcolm!

MAL
Yeah, well, whatever it takes to get the job done, right?

Mal, Zoe, and Jayne watch Wash and Jorgensen disappear into the cargo hold.

JAYNE
Luck's finally turnin', Mal.

ZOE
Yes, sir. You must be very proud of your...
accomplishments.

Mal looks like he wants to respond to Zoe, but says nothing.

JAYNE
(looking around)
Would you check this place out? Think he'll invite us to
stay for supper? I bet he's got honest-to-God steak.

ZOE
Wouldn't be surprised. But I don't think accepting would
be the best of ideas. Ott manages to get off the ground, I
don't think we want to be here when he catches up.
(to Mal)
He's going to become a problem, sir.

MAL
No, he's not.

EXT. CASTILLO – REFUELING STATION – NIGHT

Ott and Bester stand outside Ott's ship, arguing heatedly. Clarence stands nearby, watching.

MAL (VO)
Problem's already been fixed.

A dozen ALLIANCE SOLDIERS in SWAT-style gear come out of the darkness around the ship, a full-fledged raid. Before Ott and his crew can react, Ott and Clarence are pinned to the ground and handcuffed. Bester is shoved against the ship.

ACROSS THE LANDING FIELD

Nico is just coming out of one of the Quonset huts, sipping a drink. She takes in the scene and, without a second's hesitation, walks the other way, disappearing into the night around the refueling station.

BACK AT OTT'S SHIP

Gowe rushes down the ramp, all savagery and knives. He is cut down in a hail of gunfire.

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MOON – SERENITY – DAY

Mal faces Zoe and Jayne, apparently having related his tale to them.

JAYNE
(laughing)
Called the Alliance on 'em. Priceless!

MAL
No more'n they deserved. Done it to us twice already.

JAYNE
You are one <magnificent son of a bitch>, Mal!

ZOE
(cold)
Isn't he, though?

Jayne stops laughing.

ZOE (cont'd)
I don't like Ott any more than you do, Captain... Probably less... But this isn't the way. This isn't our way.
(beat)
Or is it? Is this how we win now? Is this who we are?

Zoe glares at Mal for a beat. Two beats.

Mal looks away.

Three beats. Four. Jayne gets fidgety.

ZOE (cont'd)
You must be very proud, sir.

She turns and walks up the ramp.

EXT. HAVEN – CHURCH – NIGHT

Only two of the pews are still outside, and Simon and River are sitting on one of them. In the background, Book assists two of the LOCALS as they wrestle a third pew into the church.

SIMON
I need to ask you something, *mei-mei*.
(beat)
Do you...

River looks at him.

SIMON (cont'd)
Do you think we should stay on Serenity?

River looks away into the darkness and smiles.

RIVER
About time you asked me.

EXT. SPACE

Serenity sails through the black, leaving Jorgensen's moon behind.

INT. SERENITY – ENGINE ROOM

Kaylee fusses about, with Hiroku watching. Mal comes in, looking a bit like a waiter, carrying a stack of three COVERED TRAYS.

Kaylee ignores him. Mal clears his throat.

Hiroku looks up, but Kaylee continues to ignore him.

MAL
Jorgensen missed you at dinner. Said it'd be nice to have the whole crew there.

KAYLEE
(not looking at him)
Sorry. Was too busy. Things to, you know, fix. And such.

MAL
Sure.
(beat)
Well.
(beat)
Anyway. He sent enough for both o'you.

Mal puts the trays down.

MAL (cont'd)
We got us some fruit. Vegetables. Steak. Cattle, not horse.

Hiroku eyes the trays greedily. Kaylee looks up, gives Hiroku a little nod, and the boy RUSHES the trays, tearing the lids off.

His eyes light up and he looks up at Mal.

HIROKU
Thanks, Cap'n!

MAL
You're, uh, welcome, boy. Dig—

Hiroku's not listening. He's stuffing his face with fresh fruit.

MAL (cont'd)
—in.

(beat)
Well, Kaylee, we got a little more in the dining room, for when you're done here. Best you get to it 'fore Jayne comes sniffin' around for fifths.

Kaylee does not say a word.

Awkward beat.

MAL (cont'd)
I'll just... get going.

Mal turns and walks out.

Across the engine room, Kaylee bites her lip to keep from crying.

INT. SERENITY – AFT HALLWAY

Mal steps out of the engine room and gets a few steps down the hallway when Zoe comes out through the dining room to meet him.

ZOE
Sir? A moment of your time, if you can spare it.

MAL
Of course.

ZOE
Sir, I'm going to make this plain, because I think it's what you deserve, all we've been through together.

(beat)
Wash and me, we've been talking about maybe settling down, havin' a family. We thought that maybe if we won this race, got the job for Jorgensen, we could stay on the ship and try. Because, you know, things will be safer, with the jobs being legal.

MAL

You and Wash? With some tricycle motors spinnin' about Serenity? That'd be gr—!

ZOE

Let me finish, sir.

But she doesn't say anything for a beat. Two. Three. The silence is oppressive.

MAL

You... You're leavin'.

Beat.

ZOE

I've talked this through with Wash, and we won't leave you stranded, but we don't want this to be a long, drawn-out process like it was with Inara.

Mal looks too stunned to say anything.

ZOE (cont'd)

A run or two for Jorgensen and you should have enough extra coin to take on a new pilot and any other crew you might feel you need to replace me.

(beat, no response from Mal)

Soon as things are set at Haven, we're off Serenity.

Mal nods, too stunned to do more.

Zoe turns and walks back into the dining room, leaving Mal alone in the hallway.

Mal leans against the wall, hunched over like he's been punched in the gut.

BLACKOUT